

March 26, 1996

# Burning Bright

Feld Ballets/NY

Joyce Theater

February 20 through March 31

Cathy Weis

Dance Theater Workshop

March 7 through 10

Chamecki/Lerner

P.S. 122

March 7 through 10

**BY DEBORAH JOWITT**

Usually I see a television monitor as a little box containing facts and fictions that have been carefully packaged and framed—for my mind as well as my vision. In Cathy Weis's hands, cameras, screens, and monitors fracture reality and enter dialogues with flesh. They become perambulating beds, prisons, stand-ins, and carnival rides.

A camera shoots Jennifer Monson from below and projects her upper body onto a screen in liquid rainbow segments that make us reimagine her solid, upright self as a tilting prism. Ishmael Houston-Jones's clear, sharp moves are duplicated or complemented by screen doubles; his face considers the goings-on from a corner of the screen. The camera arrests Scott Heron's scrappy jumps and, when he puts a shark hat on, locates him with the real guys cruising an ocean that scoots across the floor on wheels.

The trio constituting the second half of *Fractured, Just the Fracts, Ma'am* is wackier and less controlled than the three solos. Sophisticated technology mates with the slightly slapdash style of a show dreamed up by crazy-smart people for a Saturday night's fun. Video pastes Anne Iobst's upper body on Jennifer Miller's wild-legged dancing. Weis's head reclines in a monitor that Miller pedals across the room; "I feel reborn," says Weis dreamily, although later, as Miller pumps in circles, rotating the monitor giddily to keep it facing us, Weis scolds her, cross-eyed with rage. She gets her comeuppance: furiously yanking on ropes, Iobst makes a suspended monitor bearing Weis's talking head fly through the air.

No one theme predominates except that of the magic camera run amok. Why do Miller and Iobst (boots and skirt for one, fringed suit for the other) advance cowpokiely to appropriate music, if not so that the camera they're stalking can play with their images?

Before the performance, the audience got to play videomagic too. What could be more stimulating than to have your image superimposed on Pat Buchanan's and lift your liberal finger to pick his nose?